

**City of Augusta, Maine**  
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

AUGUSTA STATE AIRPORT  
CODE ENFORCEMENT  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



ENGINEERING  
FACILITIES & SYSTEMS  
PLANNING

Memo

To: Planning Board

From: Matt Nazar, Director of Development Services

Date: May 5, 2016

Re: Armory Signage and Comp Plan reference removal and site visits

---

**National Guard**

The National Guard has stated that they would like to replace their sign with an electronic changeable message board. They are in the GS zoning district which does not allow such signs, although all other properties along Western Ave are allowed to have them. They are requesting that the Board consider either rezoning their parcel or adding changeable message boards to the GS zoning district.

**Comprehensive Plan references in the LUO**

Corporation Council has recommended that references to the Comprehensive Plan be eliminated from the Land Use Ordinance to avoid the confusion that resulted in the overturning of a Board decision last night. The LUO is a regulatory document and the Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that cannot be used in a regulatory manner. In the past, references to the comp plan had traditionally been used to provide guidance to the Board where standards were vague, such as with "Neighborhood Compatibility". However, the way in which the reference to the comp plan is written into the ordinance, and has been longer than I've been employed by the city, can and did lead to decisions that will not stand up on appeal. At the next available meeting, I'll have a package of amendments for the Board to review.

**Site Visits**

Site visits can be problematic and can create due process issues. I'd like to discuss the options available to the Board. The Board could continue to do individual site visits as they have, but some fairly strict rules regarding how those occur need to be followed, and even then, there's the possibility of appeal and due process concerns. I can have photos and video of the site available as part of my packet to the Board as an alternative to site visits. Or the Board can make it a habit to start meetings early and do advertised, group site visits that become part of the public record. I've done that with other communities and it works well, but it is time consuming.